

Harvey Taylor

Interviews by Lapoint Elementary Sixth Grade Class, 1987

Transcribed by Janet Taylor, Uintah County Library Regional History Center, June 2001

This interview is between Harvey Taylor and Lonnie Rushton. My informant's name is Harvey Taylor and mine is Lonnie Rushton. Today is March 25, 1987. I am going to ask him about early cars and we are in Lapoint, Utah. I am in the sixth grade.

Lonnie: Describe your family's first car.

Harvey Taylor: Well, the first one we had was an Essex car. It was a blue, two-seated car, a 1923 model. It was a stick shift. You'd always have to shift them back and forth, when you would start out. And they never had a starter, you had to crank them. It had a crank and they had a foot clutch and stuff in them that you shifted with, and it had the tires that had tubes in them.

They weren't like they are now. They wouldn't go very fast like the cars do now. About the top speed, was about forty miles an hour, was as fast as they would go. We had to fill the radiators with water, then, they never had Peptone. In the fall of the year when it got cold, you'd always have to drain the water out, and be sure it was drained, or they would freeze up. They never did have anti-freeze, you know, to put in them.

Lonnie: Describe what it was like to go to town in a car.

Harvey Taylor: To go to town? Let's see. Well, when you'd go, you'd have to start your old car. You'd have to crank it and let the motor warm up. Then when you'd go from here to Vernal and that, it was just dirt roads, no gravel. Bad roads. When it stormed it was just impossible to get there. You couldn't go for mud. These streets were all the same way.

Lonnie: How far away from home could you go in a car in a day?

Harvey Taylor: I imagine you could go maybe a couple of hundred miles with them, in a day. We never had any trouble.

Lonnie: Describe the first car you owned.

Harvey Taylor: It was a little Star. It was a Star and then they went to ?, and now it's Plymouth that took it over. It was called a Star. It was a 1924, little grey coupe. It never would go very fast either, about forty miles an hour, but it was a good little car. It was the same way—you had to shift them yourself, and crank it and everything. But I don't know, it was a good little car. You always had to carry your spare tire and some patching, and a pump and a jack, so you could fix your flat tires.

Lonnie: Did you ever have to carry any spare parts?

Harvey Taylor: Yes. You'd have to be sure to have your patching and your pump and your jack and your stuff to fix it with.

Lonnie: How old were you when you drove your first car?

Harvey Taylor: I was about fifteen years old.

Lonnie: Did you have any adventures with your car?

Harvey Taylor: Yes, I was run off of the road once, over here, and tipped it over in the wash.

Lonnie: Did you have any trouble with your cars during the years?

Harvey Taylor: Well, yes. You'd have trouble getting them started when it was cold. They wouldn't start like they do now. You'd have to put a fan under them in the winter, or something, to heat them up under there, to heat the oil pan enough to get them started.

Lonnie: What were the roads like?

Harvey Taylor: They were just dirt, and they were rough. They never did grade them then, much. In the winter time, there was no snow plow. You never did have a snow plow. You just couldn't go.

Lonnie: How did the cars handle the roads?

Harvey Taylor: Not very well. They didn't handle like they do now. They didn't steer well, and they rode rough, too. They were nothing like they are now.

Lonnie: Are cars better today, or when you were a boy?

Harvey Taylor: Well, they are a lot better now than they were then. A whole lot better, in every way. That little Star car, I gave seven hundred dollars for it. That was the price of them, then.

Lonnie: Did your parents let you drive a car when you were older, until you were fifteen, or what?

Harvey Taylor: Yes, I drove it a little.

Lonnie: How long did it take to go to Vernal?

Harvey Taylor: It took about an hour. If you didn't have a flat.

Lonnie: Are there any other things that you'd like to talk about?

Harvey Taylor: No, not that I know of.

Lonnie: How many flat tires – ?

Harvey Taylor: Oh, we used to have a lot of flat tires because the tires weren't like they are now. There was poor rubber in them. They didn't last. I don't think you ever did get five thousand miles out of a set of tires. They never did. They'd break out, you know, and they were no good. Poor rubber. You'd just hit a bump and it would break, a rock or something would cut a hole through them. They were just no good.

Lonnie: Where do you think they took the old cars to when they got through with them?

Harvey Taylor: I guess we'd trade them in or maybe people took them for junk.

Lonnie: Did you ever go on any trips in your car? Long trips?

Harvey Taylor: Not very far, just to Vernal or Roosevelt was as far as I'd ever go. Or, up to the mountain. I drove it up to the sheep camps.

Lonnie: Were there any other adventures that you'd like to tell about?

Harvey Taylor: Well, I can't think of any now. I guess there have been a lot of them, but I don't remember them.